

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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S E C R E T REYKJAVIK 1470

EXDIS

SPECAT FOR MILITARY ADDRESSEES

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARR IC NATO

SUBJECT: IDF RETENTION NEGOTIATIONS: THIRD ROUND

REF: (A) REYKJAVIK 1465 (B) REYKJAVIK 1466:
(C) REYKJAVIK 1437; (D) REYKJAVIK 1449

1. SUMMARY: DEC ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS POSTPONED TO JAN AT
AT REQUEST OF FONMIN. HE SUGGESTED NEW DATE WEEK OF JAN 7.
BECAUSE OF EVENTS THAT HAPPENED PAST FEW DAYS FONMIN UNABLE OFFI-
CIALLY EXTEND ARTICLE V11 TECHNICAL REVIEW PERIOD TO JAN 25
BUT SAID WE HAVE HIS ORAL IRONCLAD ASSURANCE NO ANTI-IDF ACTION
WILL BE TAKEN BEFORE THAT DATE. HE PREDICTED GOVT WILL FALL
BEFORE CHRISTMAS BUT ALSO STATED CARETAKER GOVT "WILL MOST LIKELY"
UPON RECONVENING OF PARLIAMENT END JANUARY/EARLY FEBRUARY SUBMIT
LEGISLATION RENOUNCING DEFENSE AGREEMENT UNLESS "MIRACLE HAPPENS
AT JANUARY NEGOTIATING ROUND AND USG PROPOSES MORE SUBSTANTIAL
REDUCTIONS. CONCERN IS OVER HOLDING PROGRESSIVE PARTY INTACT
RATHER THAN TRYING KEEP COMMUNISTS IN GOVT. END SUMMARY

2. AT MY SCHEDULED MEETING WITH FONMIN AGUSTSSON THIS MORNING
HE WAS VERY UPSET OVER EVENTS OF PREVIOUS FEW DAYS. HE REFERRED
SECRET

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TO TOMAS KARLSSON EDITORIAL IN TIMINN AND MAGNUS KJARTANSSON'S
REBUTTAL IN THJODVILJINN (REFTELS A AND B) AND SAID HE AND PRIME
MINISTER AUTHORIZED KARLSSON EDITORIAL AS A FEELER OF SENTIMENT.
HE SAID INITIAL REACTIONS FROM WITHIN PROGRESSIVE PARTY STRONGLY

NEGATIVE WHICH IS CAUSING SERIOUS CONCERN TO HIM AND PRIME MINISTER. MAGNUS KJARTANSSON DEMANDING PRIMIN SUBMIT LEGISLATION IMMEDIATELY AFTER PARLIAMENTARY CHRISTMAS RECESS RENOUNCING DEFENSE AGREEMENT BUT FONMIN SAID THIS WILL NOT BE DONE BECAUSE KJARTANSSON DEMANDS IT, BUT WILL ONLY BE IF REQUIRED TO KEEP THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY FROM SPLITTING APART. HE THEN REMARKED THIS "WILL MOST LIKELY" HAVE TO BE DONE. HE THEN ADDED THAT GOVT IS EXPECTED TO FALL BY CHRISTMAS OVER THE ECONOMIC ISSUES BUT BETWEEN NOW AND THEN COMMUNISTS WILL BUILD CASE TO LEAVE GOVT OVER IDF ISSUE SO AS TO AVOID HAVING TO PARTICIPATE IN STRINGENT ECONOMIC MEASURES GOVT MUST PROPOSE.

3. FONMIN ASKED WHETHER USG WOULD BE WILLING TO "BLUFF" THE IDF ISSUE AND MAKE VERY DRASTIC PROPOSALS WHICH USG "MAY NEVER HAVE TO CARRY OUT." I TOLD HIM BLUFFING WAS ALWAYS DANGEROUS AND THAT USG PROPOSALS MADE TO DATE HAVE BEEN HONEST AND SINCERE, SAFEGUARDING ALL INTERESTS (DEFENSE OF ICELAND AND NATO). I ALSO REMARKED THAT WITHOUT DOUBTING HIS GOOD INTENTIONS, NEITHER HE NOR ANYONE ELSE CAN PREDICT ACTIONS OF A FUTURE GOVT. EVENTS CHANGE SO QUICKLY IN ICELAND IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT WEEK, LET ALONE 2 OR 3 YEARS FROM NOW. HE AGREED SUCH WAS THE CASE.

4. FONMIN ALSO REMARKED SOME LEADERS IN HIS PARTY FEEL USG IS "TOYING" WITH HIM AND WILL NOT EVEN CARRY OUT THE PROPOSALS ALREADY PRESENTED. I DENIED THIS. I REMARKED SITUATION HAS GOTTEN TO STAGE WHERE USG HAS TO GUESS WHAT ICELAND WANTS WHEN HE APPARENTLY DOES NOT HIMSELF KNOW. I ALSO STATED HIS REQUIREMENT TO REDUCE MILITARY MANPOWER TO ZERO OR NEARLY ZERO BUT AT SAME TIME NOT ADVERSELY AFFECT DIRECT DEFENSE OF ICELAND IS CONTRADICTORY. FONMIN THEN ASKED HOW FAR WE CAN REDUCE IF WE FORGET ABOUT THE DIRECT DEFENSE OF ICELAND AND MAINTAIN ON ICELAND'S SOIL ONLY THE SURVEILLANCE ACTIVITIES AND THE TEMPORARY IN AND OUT OF THE DEPLOYED ROTATIONAL UNITS. I SUGGESTED IT WOULD HELP ALL CONCERNED IF HE COULD ONCE AND FOR ALL ASCERTAIN A POSITION SATISFACTORY TO HIS PARTY; WE NEED GUIDANCE ON ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVES.

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5. REGARDING TIMING OF NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS, HE SAID "MAJORITY OF CABINET" AUTHORIZED HIM TO REQUEST DECEMBER POSTPONEMENT UNTIL EARLY JANUARY BECAUSE OF PRESSURE OF BUSINESS. I SAID ALRIGHT WITH US PROVIDED IT WAS REALIZED THAT ICELAND ASKED FOR THE POSTPONEMENT AND THAT WE WERE WILLING TO HAVE DEC. SESSION. HE SAID THIS WAS FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND THAT IF HE HAD TO MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT ON IT (WHICH HE WOULD RATHER NOT YET DO), HE WOULD MAKE IT CLEAR THAT POSTPONEMENT WAS ON HIS INITIATIVE. HE ASKED IF HE COULD SAY THAT THIS MET WITH OUR APPROVAL SINCE DECEMBER WAS A BUSY MONTH IN USG AFFAIRS ALSO. I REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY. WHEN I ASKED FOR WRITTEN ASSURANCE OF A MONTH'S EXTENSION OF ARTICLE VI REVIEW PERIOD, HE REMARKED HE WAS PREPARED TO SEND LETTER TO ME AS WE HAD EARLIER DISCUSSED

BUT PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTED WAIT UNTIL REACTION TO KARLSSON'S TIMINN EDITORIALV. IN VIEW OF INITIAL REA TIONS, HE WOULD PREFER TO WAIT AND PERHAPS NOT SEND IT TO ME AT ALL. HE THEN ASKED FOR A COPY OF THE DRAFT I PROPOSED (REFTEL D) IN EVENT IT IS POSSIBLE TO DO SOMETHING ALONG THESE LINES. HE THEN PROMISED GOI WILL NOT TAKE ADVERSE ACTION AGAINST IDF BEFORE JAN 25. I TOLD HIM I WOULD FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THAT IN WRITING AND ASKED HIM TO SERIOUSLY CONSIDER DOING THIS.

6. I THEN ASKED FOR A FEW DAYS' DELAY IN SUBMITTING REVISED TABLE THREE. FONMIN SAID WE CAN HAVE A FEW MORE WEEKS IF WE LIKE SINCE HE NOW WOULD ALSO PREFER DELAY IN HAVING TO TRANSMIT THE INFORMATION.

7. COMMENT: POLITICAL SITUATION HERE TENSE WITH LOTS OF INFIGHTING GOING ON IN ALL OF THE FIVE POLITICAL PARTIES. I DOUBT THERE IS ANY LEADER IN CURRENT CLIMATE WILLING TO STICK HIS NECK OUT ON ANY VITAL ISSUE. DELAY OF NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL JANUARY WILL GIVE US TIME TO ASSESS SITUATION.

8. ACTION REQUESTED: BY DECEMBER 7 SOME INDICATION THAT WEEK OF JANUARY 7 ACCEPTABLE FOR NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS. I WOULD LIKE TO PRESS FOR WASHINGTON AS SITE.
IRVING

SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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